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ACTION ALERTS



ACTION ALERTS are messages for you to send to elected officials and need your IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. Click on the link(s) below to take action on current DPC action alerts.

A critical Action Alert on the **Medicaid Regulations Moratorium bill** has been updated for chapters/affiliates and grassroots advocates to contact their Members of Congress at their Washington offices now that Congress is back in session. The Alert can be accessed at http://ucpact.convio.net/site/MessageViewer?em_id=1621.0.

MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

Medicare

The Board of Trustees for the Medicare program issued its annual report on the future of the program. The report stated that the Medicare hospital insurance trust fund will become insolvent by 2019, the estimate given last year. The trustees projected that Medicare spending will increase from 3.2% of gross domestic product in 2007 to 10.8% in 2082, which is slightly less than trustees predicted last year. For more information, see: <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TRSUM/trsummary.html>

Social Security

The Social Security Trustees released their annual report last week indicating that the Social Security trust funds will have an annual surplus of \$196 billion in 2008. As described by the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI), annual surpluses are projected to continue for the next 18 years and reserves are projected to grow to \$5,526 billion by the end of 2026. Beginning in 2017, tax revenues flowing into the trust funds will be less than total expenditures. In 2041, the reserves are projected to be depleted. At that time, tax income coming into the trust funds will cover about 78 percent of benefits due. (See: http://www.nasi.org/usr_doc/SS_Brief_028.pdf). The Center for Budget and Policy

Priorities issued a statement indicating that the total shortfall in Social Security funds over the next 75 years is slightly less than the estimated cost of extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for just the top 1 percent of households over the same 75-year period. See: <http://www.cbpp.org/3-31-08socsec.htm>.

Education and ADA

DPC Staff Director Paul Marchand and other Co-chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force met with disability rights advocates to discuss the potential implications of the ADA Restoration Act on special education students served under Section 504 Anti Discrimination plans and on student accommodations and personnel issues in Higher Education.

FY 2009 Budget and Appropriations

The CCD Fiscal Policy Task Force, including DPC representatives, met to develop strategies on the House and Senate Conference to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the FY 2009 Budget Resolution. Key decisions to be made by the conferees include: 1) resolving the \$3.5 billion difference in human services spending; 2) developing a strategy on a reconciliation package to adjust Medicare and the Alternative Minimum Tax, with or without offsets; and 3) whether to include a second economic stimulus package.

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

U.S. Congress

The Congress returns to work today after a two-week spring recess. The Congress will be in session for an eight week period before the Memorial Day recess. This will be a key time to move bills that have a chance for enactment this year. The war and the economy will continue to dominate the agenda. Congressional Democrats want to end the war sooner than the Bush Administration does, but know that any related bills sent to the President will be vetoed. Democrats do not have the votes to override these vetoes. Action on housing financing will also be a priority in the coming weeks. Completing action on the FY 2009 Budget Resolution will take center stage in April.

The States

Several reports are concluding that more and more state budgets are in serious crisis, mostly due to the impact of the worsening national economy. Drastic revenue shortfalls in property and sales taxes are creating large deficits and forcing states to curtail spending. Twenty-two states report major budget problems with California, Florida, Rhode Island, Maine and New Jersey needing to make dramatic cuts in human services, including disability programs. With the White House threatening to veto any FY 2009 appropriations bills that spend above the amounts requested by the Administration, little help is likely from the federal government to alleviate the crisis in the states.

Medicare

On Tuesday, the House Ways and Means Committee's Health Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), will hold a hearing on the 2008 Medicare Trustees Report.

Medicaid

On Thursday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), will hold a hearing on the [Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 \(H.R. 5613\)](#). This critical legislation will place a one-year moratorium on harmful Medicaid regulations, including the rehabilitation option, school based administration/transportation and case management regulations. The hearing can be viewed on video web cast by accessing [http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.05613:/](http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.05613/) <http://energycommerce.house.gov/membios/schedule.shtml>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day

On March 25, 2008, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) introduced a resolution for the second annual Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities and Reaching for the Stars, a foundation for children with cerebral palsy. In addition to raising awareness, this resolution aims to draw attention to the need for prevalence statistics on CP. Investigators from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring CP Network (Alabama, Georgia, and Wisconsin) recently published the first population-based estimates of CP prevalence in the United States across multiple communities. That number is 3.6 per 1,000 school-age children in the United States. (Yeargin-Allsopp M, Van Naarden Braun K, Doernberg NS, Benedict RE, Kirby RS, Durkin MS. Prevalence of cerebral palsy in 8-year-old children in three areas of the United States in 2002: a multisite collaboration. *Pediatrics* 2008;121:547--54.)